

Northwestern



SOLITUDE IN THE COSMOS: Looking for Friends in the Great Cosmic Dark

presented by Shane L. Larson

Research Associate Professor and Associate Director of CIERA
Northwestern University



Wednesday
September 20, 2017
6:30 - 8:00pm

The Firehouse Grill
750 Chicago Avenue
Evanston

We are living in an age of profound discovery -- the people alive today are the first to know, with certainty, that there are planets orbiting other stars. This realization immediately engenders another earnest question: is there life elsewhere in the Cosmos? There are three possibilities. One is that the Earth is unique, the only shore in all the vastness of the Cosmos where life has found purchase. Another is that the Universe is teeming with life, of all sorts adapted to the conditions and peculiarities of whatever alien shoal it has grown up on. The last is that life is not unheard of, but uncommon enough that finding it could be a daunting endeavor.

In either instance -- life does exist elsewhere, or Earth harbors the only life in the Cosmos -- the implications are staggering and terrifying.

What do we think about life elsewhere? And how might we find out the answer to the question of if we are alone in the Cosmos or not? How do you recognize life? Can you communicate with intelligences not of Earth? In this talk, we'll explore some of the dramatic implications of the greatest question known to our species: are we alone in the Cosmos?

Science Cafe: Eat. Drink. Talk research in a relaxed atmosphere.

We are committed to promoting engagement with scientific topics and making it accessible to all.